

# THE CENSOR.

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"I have sent the Book according to your commands; I should have sent it, if you  
"had not commanded me."—*Pliny the Younger.*

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## Editorial Banquet.

On Monday last an entertainment, of dazzling and dreamy magnificence, was given by the Editors of **THE CENSOR**, to the friends and male contributors to their work. The entry of the guests, who were loudly cheered as they descended from their carriages, occupied about an hour and a half, and it was near ten o'clock before the archbishop of Swaloal, who had come from Armata expressly for the purpose, was enabled to pronounce grace preparatory to the dinner. The Chair was then taken by Bertie Vyse, Esq. Haller Cust Dalrymple acting as his deputy. The former supported by the Archbishop and Sforza, and the latter by Granville Fuller, and a noble Marquis, whose name we could not learn. Among other contributors, equally favourites of the public, we observed Crito, Marius, F.C.N., Criticus, Pollio, H.H. Θητα, Phileros, C. H., S. B., T.T.B., Melbourn, Tangent, the author of the Triple Jeu de Mots, &c. &c. The hall in which the dinner took place presented a perfect scene of enchantment, for, as the editors had determined to devote the whole of the enormous profits of their publication to this one occasion, several ruined noblemen had actually been brought over from the continent, incognito, for the sole purpose of designing extravagancies. The carpet was of rich crimson Genoa velvet, studded alternately with mats of sable and chinchilla fur, placed at the seat of each guest for the repose and warmth of his feet. The chairs were of polished ivory, in the form of ancient war chariots, clothed solely with the down of such poetic swans as had sung themselves to death. From the ceiling depended three chandeliers of real emerald, each supported by a chain of golden circled hair, culled from the brows of all the poetesses of England. The draperies of the walls were of light blue satin, bordered with a superb embroidery of classic emblems, wrought by the hand of a mysterious princess. Mirrors of the most fanciful reflection met the eye at every turn. Fountains of the purest alabaster overflowed with liqueurs of entrancing and obliterating sweetness; four of them offering to the taste the reputed water of Paradise—pipes having been laid on from Pison, Gihon, Perath, and Hiddekel, the four rivers of Eden: nor was this all, vases of china so exquisitely fragile that human breath might have shivered them to pieces, diffused over the apartment odours of such ambrosial softness, that their influence seemed not to be a sense, but a feeling;

while to lull the heart and charm the ear expensive automata, in the shape of the most rare and beautiful birds, sent forth, at intervals, gushes of harmony scarcely less fairy-like and delicious than those heard by moonlight in the aviaries of the East.

And music, too,—dear music, that can touch,  
More than all else, the soul that loves it much.

When the cloth had been removed, the Chairman rose and after an appropriate panegyric on the public and private virtues of his sovereign, gave—"The most magnanimous monarch, and most accomplished gentleman in the world—His Majesty King George the Fourth," which was drunk with enthusiastic cheers. *Air*, God save the King. The usual toasts having followed, Crito rose and proposed, "Success to the Censor," with 999 times 999. After the arithmetician, engaged for the occasion, had calculated the required number of hips, the toast was drunk amid the most heart-cheering plaudits ever heard within the island of Great Britain. The applause having subsided, or become

"so low as but to seem  
Like the faint exquisite music of a dream;"

Dalrymple rose, to return thanks: his stern and grave deportment formed a haughty contrast to the glowing features of those around him.—"Friends of the Censor," said he; "Proneless as I am to be led away by the vox popularis; deeply as I detest impulses of the moment; yet despite my prejudices do I now feel myself subdued into such vulgar susceptibility." (*Here he assumed a dejected posture.*) "I can only say your applause has been most just. I pledge ye in return; and may it ever be your fate to peruse such delightful works as the Censor." The majestic Haller sate down amid the cheers of the company, and a flourish of trumpets. Marius, said he had a toast to submit, whose mere mention would be its own eulogy; he would give, "The Three Editors." (*Frantic cheers*) Granville Fuller returned thanks, and concluded with proposing the health of the Contributors. Bertie Vyse rose to second the toast; but, said he, "anxious as I am to evince my respect for the individuals we are about to pledge, still I must dissent to the toast in its present form. There is one individual whose name stands so prominent in the pages of the Censor, that it would be a gross injustice to that individual to let his name be less prominent here—Gentlemen, I allude to the poet Sforza;"—(*Hear, hear!*)—"of the high value and estimation in which I hold whose abilities you have this astounding proof;—that, vain as I am of my own poetic talents, the only pieces with which I have honoured the Censor are, 'My Infant Boy,' 'Affliction,' and that passionate pair of ottavos the 'First Kiss.'" (*Bravo, Vyse!*) "Gentlemen, allow me to substitute—Sforza, and the rest of the Contributors to the Censor." The author of the "Triple Jeu de Mots" here rose, "Friends, I would amend the toast still further; allow me to propose the health of Sforza singly." (*Immense cheering.*) "To a poet of such exquisite conception and rising eminence, no less a meed is due. When I talk of 'the manifest



beauty and originality of his productions;" of the "soft and deep power of his eye," and of the "dome-like sweep of Poetry visible on his forehead;" I am not using my own language, but the language of the Athenæum and the Literary Chronicle. "I could wish the strings of his lyre yielded less melancholy sounds; but who can controul the throbbings of the poet's heart?—The health of Sforza." (*Rapturous applause.*) Sforza then rose—"Could I speak as eloquently as I feel, or vividly as I think, no language would be, at this moment, more fluent or more burning than mine; you, however, who can so well conceive what should come from a poet's lips, will give me the benefit of that conception, and imagine me to have said all I should say on so interesting an occasion. The melancholy of my Muse has been alluded to: I know not why, but to poets there is a charm in melancholy, which mirth can never share; but if my strings, mournful as they are, have not sounded ungrateful to the ears of others,—if (to do what Byron has imputed to Rosseau) I have thrown "enchantment over sadness," so far as to cast a gleam of pleasure on one human breast, that melancholy is dispelled,—and were it not, least of any moments should I give way to it in these; and although, amid the world's dark gloom, I have lost some smiles"—here he became too affected to proceed—when a beautiful figure attired as the Muse Erato,<sup>6</sup> glided suddenly before him, and placed a lute in his hands. The illusion had the desired effect; he dashed the tear from his eye, and seizing the instrument,

"In the pathetic mode of Isfahan,  
Touched a preluding strain, and thus began."

'Tis true there are visions of sadness,  
Too often that flash o'er the mind,  
But in the bright presence of gladness,  
We should leave such remembrance behind:  
In a world where each joy is so fleeting,  
And friends are so false and so rare;  
When hearts like our own are thus meeting,  
Hope should banish the gloom of despair.  
Then drink, and think not of the morrow,  
But let pleasure float light o'er each soul,  
And if any be tainted with sorrow,  
Let it sink in the depth of the bowl:  
And first we should deem it a duty,  
To drink to those beings on earth,  
Who, shaped in the image of beauty,  
Impart to existence its worth;  
For them sure was life only given,  
They seem like the angels of bliss,  
Sent down from the bowers of Heaven,  
To bloom on a desert like this.  
Then drink—for of nothing more precious,  
Than Woman, my friends, can we boast;  
And the draught will be doubly delicious,  
Since Woman, sweet Woman's the toast.

These verses were received with enthusiasm amounting almost to madness, and the health of the ladies was drunk with a fervour equally boundless and extatic.

The health of the visitors and contributors was then drunk ; on behalf of whom respectively, the archbishop of Swaloal and T.T.B. (the latter evidently under the influence of an apparition) returned thanks.

The noble Marquis, whose name we could not learn, was about to rise, when a sudden outcry arose from a person endeavouring to thrust himself into the apartment. On enquiry, it turned out to be the correspondent Rusticus ; who, having heard of the dinner, had set off instantly from Gloucester, and being now arrived at the room insisted on making one of the party. On the intimation that Rusticus was about to enter in his travelling apparel, Vyse became dreadfully agitated, and, on seeing him actually enter in his rustic garb, instantly fainted. Sforza and the Archbishop immediately flew to his assistance ; which Dalrymple perceiving, requested them to desist ; observing that Vyse always preferred fainting after the luxurious manner of Sardanapalus. A perfumed ottoman was then brought, on which he was suffered to swoon ; and in a few minutes a select air of Rossini's completely restored him : Rusticus, in the mean time, having been lodged in the watch-house.

Vyse now being perfectly sensible, fell into an attitude of the most bewitching elegance, and spoke as follows :—" My friends, we have drank many toasts to night, but the dearest of all we have yet omitted. I will give you ' The smile at home.' " He scarcely uttered these words, when a voice of the most touching sweetness was heard singing the following words, with which Sforza had previously presented her.

Ah ! remember the smile that is beaming at home,  
Far sweeter than any wherever ye roam ;  
From the revel, oh ! fly, if that smile be held dear,  
Ere your absence has shaded its light with a tear.  
You may talk as you will, of the falsehood that lies  
In the heart of a woman, or beam of her eyes,  
That heart is the first with affection to burn,  
Those eyes are the last from affliction to turn :  
Then a health to the smile that is beaming at home,  
Far sweeter than any wherever ye roam,  
But, oh ! fly to it quickly if still it be dear,  
Ere your absence has shaded its light with a tear !

The strains of the minstrel made a deep impression on the company, who continued for some time in blissful silence. Three palanquins then glided into the banquet-room, into which the Editors gracefully threw themselves ; in which state, they were conveyed to their respective mansions, and in a few minutes the once crowded and illumined hall was dark and desolate.

**Eveline O'Donnell,**  
(*Concluded.*)

Eveline's heart beat violently, whilst her mother received her guest with perfect politeness and composure. In the person of this young man, already distinguished as a rising artist, there was little to produce a strong impression, at the first glance his countenance might not even have attracted notice; but his eyes, when animated, were illumined with the soul of genius. Two years prior to this period Eveline had first seen him, during a visit she had made with her mother and cousin to a splendid villa in the neighbourhood of Paris; it was a spot eminently calculated to invite the labours of the artist, and Delville often visited it avowedly to take sketches. In this enchanting retreat he was first seen by Eveline, who was passionately fond of landscape painting, and who gazed with admiration on the exquisite touches of his masterly pencil. At this interview she addressed to him some simple enquiry respecting his art; she said little, but it was in a voice of melody to which he could not listen without delight. He replied with modest frankness, his eyes were never raised to hers, but they had glanced over her face and her form, and it soon appeared that her image was engraven on his heart. Some months after, the friends of Eveline were surprised to discover in a public gallery a picture in which her likeness was faithfully portrayed. Although this circumstance was ascribed to chance alone, it was believed that the artist whose beau ideal was in her realized, was eminently calculated to succeed in taking her real portrait. Accordingly Delville was chosen for this task; at the first application he declined the task, alleging that he was not accustomed to portrait painting; but no sooner had he heard the name of Mademoiselle O'Donnell, than he recalled his words, and appeared eager to commence his labours. On visiting the General's hotel, neither Madame O'Donnell nor Lucy recognized in him the solitary artist they had met in the country, but by Eveline he was not overlooked. His air was manly; his manners simple and noble; his conversation full of intelligence and enthusiasm; and, without any ostentatious display of knowledge, he gradually unfolded a mind adequate to every subject; he delighted in traits of heroism and generosity, his eyes enforced the eloquence of his lips whilst he dilated on any noble action or elevated sentiment. The slowness with which he performed his task allowed ample opportunity for the development of his intellectual powers; yet so delicate was his sense of propriety, that even when left alone with his lovely model, he never ventured to drop a word that could alarm a mother's prudence, and it was only by the reluctance with which he accepted remuneration that suspicion could have been awakened in the most vigilant observer. The acquaintance which Delville had thus begun with the family he was allowed to cultivate; he had occasional access to the house; and on public nights, when other visitors were



admitted, he conversed with Eveline on painting, or on various subjects connected with the arts, but always in such guarded terms as to elude jealousy and disarm reproach. It was with his usual modesty and manliness of deportment, that Delville entered the apartment from which he had been so long excluded, and once more paid his compliments to Madame O'Donnell and her daughter; by the former he was received with a more friendly cordiality than he had ever before experienced: but it may be presumed, her words, however gracious, inspired not such delight as the downcast glance and conscious blushes of the lovely girl who sat trembling by her side. By degrees, however, Eveline gained sufficient self-possession to take her part in the conversation; but her touching accents awakened emotions new to Delville, and for the first time a presumptuous hope kindled in his breast. Lucy's eyes glistened with gratitude, and the benignity of Madame O'Donnell's countenance seemed to offer the maternal benediction. At this delicious moment, when, by a sort of sub-intelligence, each heart comprehended what was passing within the other, the happiness of the party was reversed by the unlooked for appearance of the General, who, not having found his friend at home, returned in visible ill-humour, which, at the unexpected sight of Delville, was manifested by significant signs of wonder and displeasure. Without deigning to notice the guest, he observed drily, "that as he perceived the table was full, he would dine in his own apartment;" and thither was he hastening, when Madame O'Donnell, for whom he ever shewed profound respect, entreating him to be seated, arrested his steps; he yielded with a bad grace, and to testify his displeasure, never exchanged one word with Delville during dinner, nor even appeared conscious of his presence. In vain did Madame O'Donnell redouble attentions to the slighted Delville, the too susceptible Eveline betrayed by her pale cheeks and ashy lips, the internal anguish of her soul; whilst Delville, though but too sensible to the affront, had sufficient self-command to remain at table until the cloth was removed, when, having respectfully taken leave of the ladies, he instantly withdrew from the apartment. "It must be confessed," said the General to his sister, "that you have adopted singular ideas respecting society; surely we ought not to confound the ranks of life; never would I admit to the table, those whom courtesy has improperly invited to our suppers, but whom our ancestors would more properly have dismissed to the butler's table." Whilst Madame O'Donnell combated the prejudices so unseasonably expressed, Eveline's heart swelled with anguish, and when she attempted to speak, the words died on her lips, and leaning on her hand, she was even unconscious of the tears that trickled down her cheeks; alive to the conviction that all her calculations of earthly felicity were at an end, a convulsive tremor shook her frame, she suddenly fell into Lucy's arms, and in that state was conveyed to her bed. From that moment, the disease so long latent burst forth with uncontroled violence—the dream of hope

had vanished, she sunk under the influence of despair; and it soon became apparent that she was on the brink of an untimely grave.

Too late did the General become sensible of the error he had committed; in vain did he execrate the pride that had prompted him to insult the feelings of an artist, or proclaim his willingness to renounce the prejudices to which he had sacrificed the peace of Eveline; in this, however, he deceived himself, they were interwoven with his existence; and had Eveline been restored to his prayers, they would have resumed their former empire. But the recovery of Eveline was far distant; and already was she mourned as dead by the poor whom she had succoured, the afflicted whom she comforted, the unfortunate whom she cherished. Of these real mourners, the prayers and petitions were silently though fervently offered, far different were the numerous cards and formal enquiries left at the Hotel; yet frivolous as such attentions usually are, Eveline omitted not to enquire for the list, in which, by an unlucky precaution, she was not allowed to recognize the only name in which she had a real interest. That this suppression had been injudicious, was evident from the alteration in her countenance: the mournful accent in which she exclaimed, "Ah! there are then many who forget me," escaped not Lucy's notice, and the next day Delville's name was permitted to meet her eye; her eyes glistened, she breathed a deep sigh, and was scarcely to be restrained from pressing it to her lips. After this trial of her feelings, she never failed to receive the pledge of Delville's remembrance; and to this indulgence was added the gratification of hearing that he came several times in the course of the day, and he was repeatedly mentioned in terms of high respect. By such language she would once have been transported with joy, even now it assuaged her anguish; the General was touched by these artless effusions of passion, and in a broken voice he said to Eveline, "My dear child, I have already apologized to M. Delville for my abruptness, and he has received my excuses with the utmost complacency, let us now think no more of it; he is an admirable young man, I have always entertained a high esteem for his character. With such a truly estimable person we cannot be too intimately acquainted; and since he comes so often to enquire for Eveline, I see not why he should not be admitted the next time." Although these words were uttered with a deliberation that betrayed the secret repugnance of the speaker, they descended like heavenly music on Eveline's ear, the blood rushed to her cheeks; but after a momentary hesitation she replied in an altered voice, "I feel all the kindness of this proposal, and gratefully accept it; yes, let Delville be admitted." The subject was then dropped; the affectionate friends spoke of life and love, all endeavoured to infuse into Eveline's soul hopes in which they were forbidden to participate. The physician, who foresaw that an awful crisis was approaching, neither dreaded nor deprecated the interview. At



length the hour arrived when Delville, on making his accustomed enquiries, found himself admitted to the sick chamber; at that moment Eveline was in a state of animation well calculated to deceive the unpractised observer; she spoke with a vivacity that recalled the impressions of her happy days, and by her smiles had reanimated her companions, when the welcome visitor arrived, and conducted by the General himself, Delville was ushered into her apartment; he entered, but with a sort of religious awe, remained standing at some distance from the bed where lay the idolized object of his regard, nor was it without gentle compulsion that he advanced towards her, on whom his gaze was rivetted. "Approach, M. Delville," said Eveline, "we have been long acquainted, and should seem methinks to be old friends." At these words, the unhappy lover, whose person was scarcely less altered than that of his mistress, experienced a mixed emotion of rapture and despair, and seizing with transport the hand which Eveline extended, bathed it with his tears, and sunk at her feet in unutterable anguish. "Calm yourself my good friend," said Eveline, "it is not to excite your sensibility that I have invited you hither; I well know that you will grieve for my untimely end, but it is not to move compassion that I would bid you an eternal adieu. The prejudices of society might forbid this interview, which affords me the last happiness I shall ever taste on earth, but I am now hastening to the goal where the tyranny of opinion must be suspended; it is enough that my life has been sacrificed to the prejudices of mankind, I am now released from their thralldom, and in these last moments may surely be allowed to follow the dictates of my own heart; I believe I have divined your sentiments: I am aware that you have cherished for me sentiments of esteem, that you have regarded me with even more than brotherly regard: on my part, I am ready to avow, that you have had a share in all my thoughts and all my wishes, that I lived in your life, respired in your hopes, and gloried in your triumphs; to have united my fate to yours would have formed my supreme felicity, but it has been otherwise decreed." She stole a glance at her mother, and then proceeded, "I am no stranger to the generosity of your temper, and the memorials which I bequeath will enable you to extend your beneficence: and now I would but say, farewell; let me dwell in your thoughts, not to tinge them with sadness, but to inspire that confidence in your own powers, which is alone wanting to your complete success. Ah, be just to nature, and to the dying wishes of her who knew better than any one to appreciate and to cherish your excellence. Adieu, dear Delville, we shall surely meet again never to be separated; spare those tears which make death too terrible." Here her strength failed; but with a convulsive movement, grasping her lover's hand, as though she would have clung to him for support, she added in a voice scarcely audible, "Farewell, good friends, farewell," and in that tender aspiration breathed her last sighs. No longer master of himself, the distracted



Delville pressed his lips to hers, and this first and last kiss was the symbol of their union in the arms of death. It was not without violence that Delville could be torn from the beloved object; but having once quitted the cherished remains, he appears to have conceived a horror of the spot, and never re-approached the hotel. On the mournful day of funeral pomp, when the splendid escutcheons of O'Donnell were borne into the church of St. Sulpice, attended by a train of youthful mourners, it was remarked, that a person enveloped in a black mantle, stood behind a pillar, evidently in an attitude that at once bespoke all the bitterness of grief and the wildness of despair. Neither the General nor Madame O'Donnell long survived this mournful event. Lucy the homely representative of Eveline, on whom devolved their wealth, saw herself surrounded by suitors, and among others by Achillis de S., whose attentions to her cousin she had once envied, and to whose professions of regard she listened with a facility, which in the sequel she had but too much cause to regret. Of Delville nothing was known, but that he had suddenly quitted Paris, and with such secrecy that it was not possible to transmit to him the liberal bequest, to which Eveline had so gracefully alluded at their parting interview. Once only he had been recognized by Lucy at her cousin's grave, where he had mingled with her tears and prayers; but with the other members of Eveline's family he disdained to cultivate a friendship so reluctantly offered to his acceptance, or rather, he abhorred the idea of meeting those to whose bigotted pride the beloved victim had been immolated.

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#### TO THE CENSOR.

SIR,

Having seen your publication, and thinking you will be kind enough to give advice to any female in distress, I take the liberty of stating my case to you, in hopes that you will assist me to do what is right in the unfortunate dilemma in which I am placed. I have read the Rambler, Mr. Editor, and know how many distressed individuals of our sex have been made happy by the advice given them in that publication, and I consider yours a work of that nature. You must know, Sir, my father brought me to town last Wednesday, (very much against my inclination) and on this account. I am an only daughter, Sir; my mother died three years ago, leaving my father a small independency, since which we have been residing in a cottage a few miles from Bath. I am just turned of nineteen, and have formed an attachment with a young man in the medical profession, who is engaged as an assistant at Bath for the next six months, after which he will become the junior partner. I formed an attachment with him and promised to become his wife, if he could obtain my parents' consent. He is handsome and noble-minded, and very respectably connected; my father made him welcome, and allowed his attentions to me,

and I thought I was going to be happy for life. But, oh! Mr. Editor, "the course of true love never does run smooth;" for an ugly, red-faced, short, stout, man, with red curly hair, and upwards of thirty years of age, came down to see my father, from his estate near Taunton. He dined with us, and—will you believe it—as soon as I left the room, he actually proposed to my father to marry me as soon before Christmas as convenient. When he came to take coffee in the drawing-room he was anything but sober, and said some things to me without any regard to decency. I answered him severely, and expressed my dislike to his conversation and person; which irritated him so much, that he told me, like or dislike him, I should be his wife, on the tenth of January next (my father's birth day.) Thus, were all my hopes of happiness destroyed in a moment; for my father had given his consent and fixed the day, without mentioning it to my true lover. Oh! Mr. Editor, what power does not riches give! This horrible monster, finding that my lover came to see me every other day, persuaded my father to bring me up to town to his lodgings. What am I to do, Sir? My father is determined; I have—he owns I have—always been a dutiful child, yet he is determined to sacrifice his daughter's peace of mind and happiness for ever—for the sake of giving her a rich husband, whom she detests and abhors, and because the ugly wretch has promised him a new German waggon as soon as we are married.

Can you wish or advise me to marry such a creature as this, Mr. Editor?

I long for your advice, and the next number of your work will be anxiously expected by your unhappy

ELLEN.

Oh, Miss Ellen!—"varium et mutabile semper fœmina!"—what will become of the *noble-minded assistant* at Bath, if you waver thus? Why put to us questions which can be answered by your own heart alone? Why ask any one advice, which, if dissonant from your own feelings, you do not mean to follow? "Child of the country," as Allan Cunningham says, wait till to nineteen years you can add two more, and then let your own inclination be your guide. In the mean time, there can be no dragging by force to the altar; "where there's a will there's a way," but should we hear of your being united to the "*ugly, red-faced, short, stout man*," we shall exclaim, where there's a way there's a will. You will, perhaps, lay that flattering unction to your soul, "whatever is, is right;" but, oh! fascinating Miss Ellen, do you believe Mr. Pope? With such a sentiment in his heart, could he have written that delightful letter from Heloise to Abelard? To what an unamiable brevity would her epistle have been reduced by it. Adieu! Miss Ellen; you have a greater power than riches can give;—exercise it—and remember that, notwithstanding what Mr. Pope has said, whatever is *not* right, is wrong.



**Address to Winter.**

Hail, hoary Winter! with thy snow-wreathed brow,  
 'Tis meet that we beneath thy sceptre bow;  
 Spring—Summer—Autumn,—each with lib'ral hand,  
 Have shed their blessings on our favoured land,  
 Have summoned breezes from the genial west,  
 And clothed the mountains in a beauteous vest:  
 But now we turn to eye the chilly north,  
 And view thine icy pageantry come forth;  
 Swift at thy breath the flowers disappear,  
 The tree is leafless, and the landscape drear;  
 Where'er thou shak'st thy hoary locks, the snow  
 Clothes the hard ground and checks the river's flow;  
 And then, anon, thy breath in frosty blore,  
 Breathes on the surface—icing it all o'er.  
 It is, stern Sire! by thy correcting arm,  
 That we are taught to prize fair Nature's charm;  
 Although no birds in leafy foliage sing,  
 And gaily skim aloft on playful wing;  
 Although bright rays now smile not from on high,  
 Nor silver stream reflects an azure sky;—  
 Although fair Beauty's hand is pale and chill,  
 And her numb'd feet have left the yellow hill;  
 Tho' o'er her faded form fond Memory grieves,  
 And cold winds cover it with withered leaves;  
 Yet when revived again she treads the lawn,  
 And fair morn smiles on her and she on morn;  
 When her fair fingers ope the blooming rose,  
 And o'er the flowery fields mild Zephyrus blows;  
 When on the tree green leaves again appear,  
 And trembling from them hangs the dewy tear;  
 'Tis then, O yes! tis *then* we own thy rod,  
 And trace in every change the hand of God.

S. B.

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**Common Sense versus Superstition.**

*Fancy* steps in and stamps that real,  
 Which, ipso facto, is ideal.—CHURCHILL.

**MR. CENSOR,**

A paper, "On Faith in Apparitions," contained in your fifth number, and signed T. T. B., inculcates a doctrine which appears alike repugnant to reason, to history, and to revelation; though he respectively appeals to them to justify "a belief in the power of the dead 'to burst their cerements and walk the earth.'" The writer admits, that, "in many minds, where faith in phantoms dwells, superstition is the basis of the belief," but observes, "it may be placed on a more solid foundation—mature and deliberate consideration." When we are told that the belief in apparitions

is "justified by the tenets of our religion," we naturally enquire for the *criterion*, or *test*, by which we are to ascertain when "*superstition* is the basis of the belief," and when it rests "*on a more solid foundation?*" This, however, T. T. B. has failed to supply, and it will not be difficult, with a little "mature and deliberate consideration," to shew that the cases adduced, in support of his doctrine, are but the dregs of that superstition which has, in past ages, beclouded the human intellect; but, now that the exercise and advantage of free-enquiry is becoming more extensively appreciated, there is reason to hope, that, ere long, the ignorant and superstitious fears of the people, upon this subject, will totally disappear.

"Remove," continues T. T. B. "faith in a future state of existence from the mind of man and the world would become a theatre where scenes of wickedness would be universally performed." Admitting the truth of this assertion, what has it to do with the subject? Must we necessarily consider faith in a future state of existence, and faith in apparitions co-essentials in "our religion?" Will it not be admitted that an individual may believe the one, while he rejects the other? Or will T. T. B. assert that the evidence in support of his *Dover Castle spectre* is as strong as that adduced to prove a future state of existence? But, he continues, "Can the idea of unalloyed happiness be connected with the *total oblivion* of those we leave on earth to mourn for us?" Here his meaning is enveloped in obscurity. Is it that all who have departed this life, without faith in apparitions, must of necessity have believed that their survivors would be consigned to "*total oblivion?*" "May we not, then," he continues, "with reason suppose, that the form of a departed being may, to accomplish some wish, connected with those it loves, be permitted to appear on earth?" and, apparently aware of the difficulty of answering this question in the affirmative, casts that task upon his readers, and contents himself with citing two cases, the force of which a little reflection will completely dissipate. I will, therefore, now proceed to answer his enquiry, by submitting such facts to the consideration of your readers as induce me to think that we cannot "*reasonably*" accede to his supposition.

Man, in his uncivilised state, is prone to ascribe to supernatural causes, all those occurrences, which, from ignorance, he is unable to explain. We are informed, that the phenomena connected with eclipses, comets, and meteors, were to our ancestors inexplicable; and even the causes of thunder and lightning were not very generally known till within these few years. When we reflect upon the low state of knowledge in past ages, is it wonderful that imposition should spring up where ignorance and credulity flourished? We find, accordingly, that the most incongruous and fanciful stories were believed with avidity. History informs us, that the Egyptians were the first who entertained a general belief in the existence of spirits. From Egypt the belief in phantoms was soon extended to Greece, and thence to Rome: the poets



embellished these fictions, and the priests, as usual, turned them to profit. Every thing in nature,—even the virtues and vices of mankind,—as well as the uncommon diseases with which human nature was afflicted, was imputed to spirits and demons; till, at length, these delusions, repeatedly impressed upon the unthinking multitude, by their *spiritual* instructors, became the opinions and even the religion of the people.

When the emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity, there can be very little doubt but that all the heathen priests were converted also; and still less doubt that all those demoniacal and spiritual fictions, by which the heathen priests were enabled to fleece their flocks, were carefully engrafted upon Christianity. These phantoms brought immense profit to the priests. Charms, exorcisms, and masses for the dead, powerfully operated to perpetuate alike the ignorance and credulity of the people, and the dominion of priestcraft.

In England this gainful trade was in a most flourishing condition; scarcely a church-yard or empty house, which was not infested with these spirits, and their perversity was not a little extraordinary, as they never ceased their pranks, till the holy man had laid them in the Red Sea, the place where they were all comfortably deposited. But a new era arrived. After Bacon, Locke, and Newton, had burst the trammels in which the human intellect was confined by the then existing systems, and had conducted their sublime investigations to satisfactory conclusions, it was impossible that their bright example should have been lost upon society; and it was not long before the influence of free-enquiry was felt upon every subject. Numerous absurdities in philosophy and religion were exploded. Witchcraft was soon demolished, and old women were at length permitted to die in the natural way. Ghosts and goblins became less frequent, and even when they paid us an occasional visit, their deportment was greatly improved; they doffed the white sheet, and condescended to appear in the habiliments worn by them before they were defunct.

This brief sketch of the progress of superstitious ideas upon the subject of faith in apparitions brings me to a consideration of the two *well-attested* cases of T. T. B. It is not at all surprising that the marvellous stories of ghosts and goblins, formerly current, should have made an indelible impression upon the minds of the weak and the ignorant, nor that individuals of good understandings should be strongly influenced by their preconceived opinions upon this subject: hence we find the more intelligent, though they reject the preposterous notions which were generally entertained, believe that, for wise purposes, the Deity does, occasionally, permit the dead to visit their survivors: but, if we assent to the principle, with what propriety can we withhold our assent to the grossest absurdities, seeing that every case rests upon the same foundation—human testimony? Sensible men, though they reject most of these stories, about apparitions, unfortunately believe others which rest on no better evidence than those they reject. This is the case

with T. T. B. What is there in the story of the Dover Castle spectre to induce belief? A weak, unthinking, superstitious, fiddling colonel had undertaken to forward a small sum of money to the widow of a soldier, whom he had recently seen in the agonies of death; and, having neglected to perform his promise, what supposition more natural than that something, with which we are unacquainted, should (while playing to himself to fill up the vacancy of his mind) have so strongly renovated past sensations, that he actually believed he saw the soldier, and heard him distinctly declare, "You have forgotten your promise?" The second case is, by T. T. B.'s own admission, still less convincing. Who would have faith in apparitions from the statement of a person who appears to have been a dissipated frequenter of brothels? Such abandoned conduct, combined with the benevolent dispositions which Mr. D—p evidently possessed, was quite sufficient to account for his mind (without active employment) being depressed, and his imagination bewildered; and so far am I from doubting that he fancied he saw one fair siren reproaching him for breach of promise, that I could readily believe he saw an hundred.

H. H.

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### Dramatic Censor.

#### WESTMINSTER PLAY.

On Wednesday, the third of December, a crowded and fashionable audience assembled to witness the representation of Terence's *Adelphi*, performed by the King's scholars of Westminster, in the college dormitory, which was tastefully and classically fitted up for the occasion. Though we were prepared to find, in young men educated at Westminster, a correctness of conception, and a just idea of the characters they had to sustain; yet the pleasure we derived from seeing such conception well executed, was more than we could reasonably have anticipated from performers so young, and so wholly inexperienced in theatrical exhibitions. The admirable precision with which they went through the whole of the stage business, reflects no less credit on themselves, than on the assiduity of the Rev. G. Preston, the under master of the school, who superintended the rehearsals. Every one of the *Dramatis Personæ* exerted himself successfully; but Sutherland, as the ingenious servant Syrus, acted with an extraordinary degree of spirit, and was deservedly applauded throughout every scene in which he was engaged. Micio and Demea, were ably represented by Woodfall and Heathcote; and the two sons of the latter were well performed by Biscoe and Snell. The female characters were likewise supported with considerable ability, particularly that of the nurse Canthara, by Strangways, who assumed the tone and manner of an old woman with admirable exactness.

The comedy was received with great approbation by the audience, and it was repeated on Wednesday last with increased effect. The last performance will take place on Monday next.



## DRURY LANE.

A translation of the French operetta *La Viëille* has been produced here, under the title of *Love in Wrinkles; or, The Russian Stratagem*. The piece has not much interest, and serves merely as a vehicle for the music, which is light and pretty, but that is all that can be said for it. Braham *acted* one of the characters exceedingly well, and infused into it a degree of spirit and vivacity, seldom to be met with in a vocalist. The music, however, is not suited to his powers; it is by far too weak, and affords him no opportunity for the display of that energy and feeling, by which his singing is generally distinguished. Miss Love assumed the disguise of an old woman of sixty; and though her face did not assist the deception, she played the part admirably. The operetta was well received throughout, and the announcement of its repetition gave general satisfaction.

Therese has been revived at this theatre with considerable success, Miss E. Tree appearing, for the first time, as the heroine. Her performance was chaste, simple, and exquisitely true to nature, creating in the audience a powerful and almost a painful interest. Carwin, the advocate, is one of those parts for which Mr. Cooper is in every respect qualified; it is one requiring no vehement expression of passion, but merely a delineation of cool, wary, and determined villainy. If Mr. Lee was considered worthy of being put into the part of the Count, he ought, at least, to have been allowed a dress suitable to the character. Poor Mr. L. has quite enough on his own account, without being compelled to bear the disapprobation intended for the wardrobe of the theatre.

## COVENT GARDEN.

This theatre re-opened on the 4th of December, with the *Merchant of Venice* and the *Beggar's Opera*. The gas has been entirely removed from the boxes, which are now illuminated with wax, eight new lustres having been added to the upper circle.

On Friday, a musical entertainment was produced, called the *Sublime and Beautiful*, founded on Bickerstaff's farce of the *Sultan*, nearly the whole of which has been retained. The first act, however, is for the most part new; and a few unmeaning clap-traps have been introduced about King George and English liberty. We had hoped that this sort of nonsense was falling into disuse; the taste for it has, at all events, in a great measure subsided. Audiences no longer become enthusiastic at the mention of a *British Tar* or a *Chelsea Pensioner*; and the humbug about *happy old England* has lately become so palpable, that even the gods receive allusions to the subject either in complete silence, or bestow on them applause so faint, as to shew itself to be rather the effect of habit than of impulse.

But to return to the musical entertainment. Why it is called *Sublime and Beautiful* we are totally at a loss to divine; but the managers doubtless agree with Shakspeare as to the unimportance of a name: we should nevertheless suggest the idea of applicability. The music is by A. Lee, and is somewhat better than the generality of his compositions, the fault of which principally lies in

their want of feeling and expression. One of the songs assigned to Miss Hughes has some merit, and she executed it so well as to occasion a double *encore*. On the second night of the representation of the piece, she had, in obedience to the audience gone through the song alluded to *three times*, when a ridiculous call was made by some persons for its repetition. She stood waiting for the noise to subside, before she proceeded with her part, and the audience supposed her to be expecting the entrance of one of the performers; a general cry of "come on" was raised, and in a few minutes Madame Vestris appeared, towards whom great dissatisfaction was expressed, on account of the delay which it was believed she had occasioned. Upon this Madame Vestris stood for some time in astonishment; and on the hissing continuing, came forward and addressed the house—"Ladies and Gentlemen, I am not aware how I have deserved your disapprobation; Miss Hughes has several lines to speak after her song, and therefore I could not come on." This had the effect of restoring order, and the piece proceeded without further interruption. Mr. Wood, as the Sultan, acted with his accustomed languor, and sang in the same feeble manner as usual. Keeley, as Mustapha, looked comical, but his part did not suit him. Miss Hughes gave the music allotted to her with great taste; and Madame Vestris, as Elizabeth, (the Roxalana of the Sultan) wore three different dresses, in each of which she looked very pretty, and sang and acted with considerable spirit. The piece, however, will not become particularly popular.

We must again revert to the disgraceful neglect of the operatic department; disgraceful, because it is a defect which might be remedied by the engagement of Sapio, who has been delighting the inhabitants of Hull by his brilliant talents, whilst the visitors of Covent Garden must be content to hear such powerless and soulless strains as proceed from Messrs. Wood and Bianchi Taylor.

#### SURREY THEATRE.

A new drama, called the Pretender, was brought out at this theatre on Monday last. It is founded on the hardships endured by Charles Stuart, in his attempt to gain the crown of England. The principal characters were well performed by Williams, Osbaldiston, and Mrs. Fitzwilliam. The piece was decidedly successful, and will doubtless become a favourite.

Mr. W. G. Elliston's benefit takes place on Monday next, on which occasion, he will make his first appearance on the stage. This with the other attractions will we hope produce a bumper.

#### ADELPHI THEATRE.

The Earthquake, a burletta founded on Moore's Epicurean, was performed for the first time on Monday last. We have not space to devote to a criticism on the merits of the piece.

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